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FIELD EDUCATION PROGRAM MANUAL

2016-2017

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FIELD EDUCATION: THE FOURTH PILLAR IN SEMINARY FORMATION

In his 1992 Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Pastores dabo vobis* (“I Will Give You Shepherds after my own heart” – Jer 3:15), Bl. John Paul II spoke of the entire formation program for priests as resting upon “four pillars” – human, spiritual, intellectual and pastoral formation of candidates for the priesthood.

In significant degree this fourth pillar of formation for the priesthood (often referred to as “field education” because a substantial portion of it occurs in the context of ministry among the people whom the seminarian is preparing to serve as a priest) deals with the acquisition and perfecting of the skills and abilities that a priest needs to carry on an effective ministry of service in the name of the Lord Jesus, through programs of hands-on training under the auspices of well-qualified supervisors.

Pastoral Formation is not of secondary importance in the preparation of priests. On the contrary, the 2006 *Program of Priestly Formation* (Fifth Edition) of the United States Catholic Conference of Bishops notes, “All four pillars of formation are interwoven and go forward concurrently. Still in a certain sense, pastoral formation is the culmination of the entire formation process: ‘The whole formation imparted to candidates for the priesthood aims at preparing them to enter into communion with the charity of Christ the Good Shepherd. Hence, their formation in its different aspects must have a fundamentally pastoral character’ (PPF §236, citing *Pastores dabo vobis* #57).

The Bishops go on to say:

To be a true “shepherd of souls” means standing with and for Christ in the community, the Christ who teaches and sanctifies and guides or leads the community. The grace to be a shepherd comes with ordination. That grace, however, calls for the priest’s personal commitment to develop the knowledge and skills to teach and preach well, to celebrate the sacraments both properly and prayerfully, and to respond to people’s needs as well as to take initiative in the community that holy leadership requires (PPF §238).

The Field Education program of Mount St. Mary’s Seminary of the West is designed to meet this essential dimension of priestly formation, fulfilling the requirements set out by the PPF in its Norms for Pastoral Formation, §§242-255.

PASTORAL FORMATION AT MOUNT ST. MARY'S: AN OVERVIEW

At Mount St. Mary's Seminary, the pastoral formation of seminarians is an integral part of their overall preparation for priestly ministry. Through the Field Education program every seminarian receives hands-on, guided experience in a variety of aspects of pastoral ministry throughout the years of his seminary formation.

- In the First and Second Years of Pre-Theology, the seminarian is assigned a charitable site or agency at which to perform apostolic works every week. The expectation is that the seminarian will work directly with the poor and marginalized of society.
- During the Summers following First and Second Pre-Theology, the seminarian is encouraged to arrange to live in a parish and participate in pastoral experiences as assigned by his director of vocations. While the first summer is ordinarily focused on parish ministry, the second is focused on some form of specialized ministry.
- In First Theology, the seminarian will choose an apostolic works site that will serve as the location for his Social Ministry Project.
- In Second Theology the seminarian takes part in a year-long catechetical practicum associated with the course on the principles of catechesis.
- During the Summer following Second Theology the seminarian (if required) completes a ten-week, full-time non-parochial assignment such as CPE (Clinical Pastoral Education – hospital / health care ministry), mission work, Appalachian ministry, urban ministry, Spanish immersion, etc.
- The Parochial Internship year (if required) is spent in a parish where the seminarian learns to do parochial ministry under the supervision and guidance of an experienced pastor of his diocese. The students return to the seminary twice during this year, each for a week's time, to process what they are learning and receive more intensive training in particular aspects of ministry.
- In Third Theology seminarians take a number of academic courses, both required and elective, that have components which are pastoral in nature and fulfill requirements of the *Program of Priestly Formation*, equipping them to carry out the sacramental dimension of their priestly ministry and to acquire the skills needed for the administration of the physical and financial resources of a parish.
- In Fourth Theology seminarians take part in a variety of practicums in areas such as preaching and the celebration of the sacraments, and enter into a more extended ministerial relationship with a parish in which they exercise their diaconal ministry. In each case the locations are chosen with a view to the specific needs of the individual student and the quality of the mentoring it affords.

- Summer Residence: Seminarians are encouraged to arrange for living

accommodations in a parish during the summer months according to the norms of their diocese and vocation director.

Through the variety of programs and the continual process of evaluation which is an intrinsic part of each, the pastoral formation program at Mount St. Mary's Seminary seeks to insure that the newly ordained priest will have not only the requisite theoretical knowledge of the Catholic faith, but also the practical religious, social, and pastoral skills necessary for an effective ministry among the People of God.

PRE-THEOLOGY FIELD EDUCATION PROGRAM: YEAR ONE

The 2006 *Program of Priestly Formation* directs that the pastoral formation of seminarians is to begin in the two years of their pre-theology program. Acknowledging the importance of formational experiences working with the poor and disadvantaged, the *PPF* states,

If seminarians are to be formed after the model of Jesus, the Good Shepherd, who came “to bring glad tidings to the poor,” then they must have sustained contact with those who are privileged in God’s eyes – the poor, the marginalized, the sick, and the suffering. . . (PPF §239 bullet 11)

In the First Year of Pre-Theology, the seminarian, in coordination with the Director of Field Education, is assigned a charitable site or agency at which to volunteer every week with a minimum of two contact hours per week. The expectation is that the seminarian will work in direct contact with the poor and marginalized of society. This work may or may not be through a Catholic agency. Students are encouraged to perform their apostolic works in pairs.

Once assigned by the Field Education Director, the seminarian establishes with his supervisor at the site an agreement regarding what his specific duties will be and how the time commitment will be met. Note that seminarians are bound by all applicable provisions of the Archdiocese’s *Decree on Child Protection* of July 1, 2013.

During the course of the year, the Director of Field Education will review each seminarian’s participation. At the end of the year, there will be a formal evaluation of the seminarian by his supervisor on his ability to relate with the staff and clients, the professional skills he demonstrated, and any ways he could augment his social consciousness and/or ministerial ability. In addition, the Field Education Director is available to provide on-going consultation and site visitation if requested by a seminarian or his supervisor.

The factors that the Director looks for in evaluating the seminarian are indications that he was faithful to his weekly time commitment, was really engaged in the process, that he was open to learning from his supervisor and others, and that he was faithful to the responsibilities that he and his supervisor had worked out together. At the end of the year the seminarian and supervisor go over this evaluation together before it is submitted to the Director of Field Education. In their final meeting, the Director goes over these same materials with the seminarian from the perspective of the student’s theological reflection on his experience and any impact it has had on his vocational discernment and preparation for priestly ministry.

PRE-THEOLOGY FIELD EDUCATION PROGRAM: SUMMER FOLLOWING YEAR ONE

The *Program of Priestly Formation* directs that “Pre-theology programs should include a program for pastoral formation that introduces seminarians, perhaps for the first time, to pastoral activity. Seminarians should be directed by qualified supervisors who are able to provide orientation to pastoral activity, basic skills development, and the beginnings of theological reflection” (§ 255).

During the summer after the first year of the Pre-Theology program, each seminarian is encouraged to live in a parish. The principal goal of the field education experienced at this time is to acquaint students with the variety of ministerial activities and services taking place in parishes today – activities and services which as pastors they will someday be responsible for. Such variety may include parish administration, spiritual and liturgical programs, social outreach, and youth ministry. Unlike the internship year, the emphasis this year is not so much on learning how to actually do ministry itself as on appreciating the breadth of ministry involved in parishes today, how it interrelates, and the kind of collaborative ministry that is needed to carry it out successfully, with the accompanying implications for the seminarian’s personal vocational discernment.

It is expected that during the course of the summer, the student will observe various aspects of parish life. An assessment of the experience will occur at its conclusion by way of a written evaluation prepared by the student. It will cover what he learned from the experience about the Church, about parish life, the priesthood, and himself.

Examples of some areas of parish ministry that a seminarian could observe:

**These are just some possibilities – every parish has unique programs and activities to meet the specific needs of its people.*

Prayer and Worship

- Communion to the homebound ▪ “Forty Hours”
- Liturgical ministers’ training and enrichment programs ▪ Music ministry

Catechetics and Education

- Parish Bible Study, in any of several forms ▪ RCIA ▪ Adult Faith Formation
- CCD, PSR, or other religious education programs for children
- Marriage preparation/pre-Cana ▪ Sacramental preparation

Administration

- Parish/Pastoral Council meetings ▪ Finance/Stewardship Committee
- Parish Office work – newsletters, scheduling facilities ▪ Sacramental record keeping

Social Ministry and Service to Specific Groups

- Bereavement ministry ▪ Parish Nurse ministry or other parish health initiatives
- Holy Name Society or men’s groups ▪ Rosary Altar Society or women’s groups
- Parish Festival, dinners, social activities ▪ Parish-sponsored boy scouts / girl scouts
- St. Vincent de Paul Society, Soup Kitchen, Clothes Closet or other parish outreach
- Vocations Committee ▪ Youth Group or Young Adult ministry

PRE-THEOLOGY FIELD EDUCATION PROGRAM: YEAR TWO

In the Second Year of Pre-Theology, each seminarian will again be assigned an apostolic works site and maintain that contact through the year. See guidelines and requirements under “Pre-Theology Field Education: Year One.”

PRE-THEOLOGY FIELD EDUCATION PROGRAM: SUMMER AFTER YEAR TWO

The 2006 *Program of Priestly Formation* asks that “the seminary should attempt to keep before its diocesan seminarians the prospect of their future incorporation into a particular diocese and its presbyterate.” To this end “seminarians should have opportunities and receive encouragement to learn about their diocesan structures and offices as well as to become acquainted with the priests who compose the presbyterate” (§ 254).

To these ends, each seminarian during the summer after Second Pre-Theology, in coordination with his vocation director, is encouraged to observe or take part in some form of specialized ministry. He coordinates his observation and participation with a staff person connected with each ministry and has a meeting with the Director of Field Education at the end of the summer to ensure theological reflection and attention to the specifically priestly dimension of the ministry. One of the benefits of this summer’s field education experience is the growth of a diocesan consciousness, broader than any single parish, as the context for priestly ministry.

Specialized Ministries: Samples

<u>Type of Ministry</u>	<u>Contact Possibilities</u>
Campus Ministry	➤ Catholic universities and Newman Centers
African American Ministry	➤ Office for African American Catholic Ministries ➤ Parishes with large African American membership
Hispanic Ministry	➤ Hispanic Catholic Ministry Centers ➤ Parishes with large Hispanic membership
Asian-American Ministry	➤ Vietnamese, Filipino or Korean Catholic Communities
Urban Ministry	➤ Parishes in urban areas
Rural Ministry	➤ Diocesan Rural Life Conference ➤ Glenmary Home Missioners ➤ Parishes in rural areas
Youth and Young Adult Ministry	➤ Office of Youth and Young Adult Ministries
Inactive Catholics	➤ Office of Evangelization and Catechesis ➤ Office of Evangelization and Parish Renewal
Correctional Facilities	➤ Jail Ministries
Marriage / Pre-Marriage/ Family Life	➤ Family Life Office ➤ Pre-Cana, Catholic Engaged Encounters, New Beginnings, etc.
Evangelization Efforts	➤ Office of Evangelization and Catechesis ➤ Office of Evangelization and Parish Renewal
Ministry to the Deaf	➤ St. Rita School for the Deaf
Catholic Social Teaching	➤ Archdiocesan Catholic Social Action Office
Mission Awareness	➤ Missions Office ➤ Pontifical Mission Aid Organizations
High School Ministry	➤ Campus Ministry Offices of Catholic High Schools

FIRST THEOLOGY: THE SOCIAL MINISTRY PROJECT

In the *Program of Priestly Formation* the norms for seminary field education state: “The pastoral formation program should provide the seminarians with experience in working with and for the poor. Participation in ecumenical and interreligious programs of social action and outreach is also helpful” (§ 251).

In order to fulfill these norms, Mount St. Mary’s Seminary requires that each seminarian take one academic course in Catholic Social Doctrine (cf. the current *Athenaeum Catalog*) and that he complete an approved Social Ministry Project prior to the Pastoral Internship year.

In First Theology, the seminarian will choose an apostolic works site that will serve as the location for his social ministry project. The social ministry project consists of weekly service to the socially and/or economically needy under the supervision and guidance of an experienced professional at the project site. The student will complete a minimum of 60 contact hours at the site.

The Field Education Office provides a listing of possible options for this project available in the local area. After exploring these possibilities with the agencies themselves and receiving the approval of the Field Education Office, the seminarian chooses a project that would be good for him and establishes with his supervisor at the site a verbal contractual agreement regarding what his specific duties will be, what form of supervision and evaluation will be used (cf. the sections on Supervision and Evaluation), and how the time commitment will be met. During the course of the project the seminarian is required to record what he is learning from the experience and his theological and ministerial reflection upon it. At the end of the project a summary reflection is submitted to the Director of Field Education – what he put into it, what he got out of it, the ultimate impact the project has had on him. The Director of Field Education goes over with the seminarian these documents together with the supervisor’s evaluation to confirm that the overall project has achieved its goals.

SUPERVISION AND EVALUATION

The responsibilities of the onsite supervisor in the social ministry project are three – {1} to direct the seminarian professionally in the project, seeing to it that he has the kind of experiences that will allow him to achieve the goals of the project {2} to guide him in his thoughtful reflection on the experiences he has and {3} to provide at the conclusion of the project a written evaluation of the seminarian and his work on the form provided. The Director of Field Education provides supervisors with materials explaining the requirements of the project. In addition, during the project he is available to provide on-going consultation and site visitation if requested by a seminarian or his supervisor.

At the end of the project the seminarian is evaluated by the local supervisor on his ability to relate with the staff and clients, the professional skills he demonstrated, and any ways he could augment his social consciousness and/or ministerial ability. The seminari-

an and supervisor go over this evaluation together at the end of the project before it is submitted to the Director of Field Education. In their final meeting, the latter goes over these same materials with the seminarian from the perspective of the student's theological reflection on his experience and any impact it has had on his vocational discernment and preparation for priestly ministry. At the end of the entire process the Director of Field Education reports the data concerning the project to the Registrar's Office for the student's permanent record.

DESIRED OUTCOMES OF THE SOCIAL MINISTRY PROJECT

Professional

- The seminarian would come to know, to appreciate, and be able to act within the philosophy and goals of the agency within which he serves.
- He would become familiar with the language and concepts of the field, with the staff and clientele of the agency, and the specific tasks it has set for itself.
- He would be able to execute creatively and responsibly the tasks assigned to him in an efficient and effective manner.

Ministerial

- The seminarian would demonstrate initiative, leadership, and a desire to take maximum advantage of the possibilities to learn from the field education experience.
- He would appreciate the team model of ministry and be able to function appropriately and effectively within a ministerial team.
- Within his sphere of responsibility he would demonstrate the ability to lead others toward the greater good, toward wholeness and the appropriate use of freedom.
- He would enable others to use their gifts, insights, and energies.

Relational

- That the seminarian's relations with those whom he serves and with those with whom he works be in every respect appropriate and respectful.
- That he be able to relate with and communicate to others with ease and effectiveness.

Personal

- That from his experience the seminarian would gain insight into his strengths and better awareness of his weaknesses.
- That he would be able to take direction and be open to channels of growth and development.

Theological

- That the seminarian would be able to integrate what he learns in the classroom with what he is experiencing in the field.
- That he can see how Scripture and the Church's teaching on social justice apply to the situations he is involved in.
- That he can bring his commitment of faith to bear on his experience.
- That his judgment and actions in ministry are guided by his knowledge of theology.
- That he is able to move from service to prayer and back again to service.

SECOND THEOLOGY: CATECHETICAL PRACTICUM

In second theology each seminarian is assigned by the Field Education Office to a catechetical practicum. Seminarians will either participate in the RCIA program of an area parish or be assigned to a local Catholic high school religion classroom to complete in-class observation and teaching. In each case, the practicum lasts for the entirety of the academic year. Seminarians are required to make a minimum of three catechetical presentations during each semester.

P 220 PRINCIPLES OF CATECHESIS

In this practicum the seminarian is evaluated on how successful his teaching experience is, how well he has been able to apply the principles he learned in the classroom to the field situation – his preparedness, his communication skills, his respect for the developmental stages in human learning, his effective use of resources, and his appreciation for religious education.

SUPERVISION IN THE PRACTICA

The supervisors to whom the seminarians are assigned for their practicums are chosen not only because of their skills and track record, but also because of their willingness and ability to work with seminarians. As a consequence the seminarian is expected to make full use of this resource, meeting with his supervisor at regular intervals to discuss his progress, be offered insights into ways he could improve his skills based on the supervisor's own years of experience, and finally to process with him how various issues that had come up were handled and why.

Each student will be formally evaluated by his supervisor at the mid-point and conclusion of each semester. The seminarian and supervisor will each prepare their evaluations and discuss them together. After both have signed, they will be submitted to the Director of Field Education who will review them and then have an interview with the seminarian about his experience.

The factors that the Director looks for in this review are indications that the seminarian was really engaged in the process, that he was open to learning from his supervisor, that he was faithful to the responsibilities of the practicum and above all, that the seminarian had reflected on his experience theologically – what God was doing in the process; how what the Church teaches applied to various situations that arose; where his grasp of these teachings was revealed to be adequate or not; insights into the priestly ministry to which he aspires, and into the roles of others in Christ's work, as these and many similar considerations were concretely illustrated/confirmed/challenged in the experience.

THE INTERNSHIPS

During the summer following the second year of theology the seminarian (if required by his diocese) enters upon two back-to-back internship programs:

THE NON-PAROCHIAL INTERNSHIP

The Non-Parochial Internship is a ten-week period of intensive full-time ministerial involvement in the apprenticeship form of learning, that is, a student-learner working closely with a seasoned professional. As the name indicates, the placement in this first internship is in a non-parish setting, for example a hospital, a correctional institution or a university campus. During these ten weeks, the student ordinarily lives away from the seminary in a rectory convenient to the ministry site. After consultation with the seminarian's Vocation Director, the Formation Team and Director of Interns will discuss with the student the appropriate Non-Parochial Internship placement.

Evaluative elements of this internship include a visit to the site by the Director of Interns and a written evaluation by the seminarian's supervisor. In addition, to assist in his integrating his ministerial experience, theological studies, and personal and spiritual growth, at the conclusion of the non-parochial internship the student writes a theological reflection paper. This paper and the supervisor's evaluation are included in a final reflection session with the Director of Pastoral Interns.

As indicated, the supervised non-parochial experience is ordinarily placed during the summer before the parish internship; the two thus constitute "the pastoral year." By way of exception, this internship may be done during the summer following first theology or even after the year of Parish Internship; special permission is required to take the non-parochial internship at any time other than the customary time.

PLANNING FOR THE NON-PAROCHIAL INTERNSHIP

Some dioceses require all their students, under normal circumstances, to take a specified form of non-parochial internship, for example, Clinical Pastoral Education. If his diocese permits the seminarian himself to choose the form of non-parochial internship opportunity he will pursue, he should consider what ministry skills and what professional insights it would be helpful for him to acquire. The particular ministry experience, the site, and the supervision can often be very significant in one's own self-perception and future pastoral effectiveness. Questions such as the following may provide matter for reflection before making this ministry decision:

- ❖ Which area(s) of ministry is/are totally lacking in my experience? Am I conscious of a deficiency which could be remedied by or an area of unfamiliarity that would profit from systematic, supervised attention?

- ❖ How do I envision the ministry that I will be doing as a priest 3 to 7 years

from now – and how do I prepare for that?

- ❖ How can I best improve pastoral skills in which I am weak and which I will need for priestly ministry?

STEPS IN THE NON-PAROCHIAL INTERNSHIP

1. An appointment with the Director of Pastoral Interns may be made at any time from the beginning of first theology on to bring the Field Education choice to a focus and eventually to a firm decision.
2. The seminarian should schedule an appointment at the location of the proposed internship project to introduce himself and discuss his expectations for the Non-Parochial Internship project. He should ascertain the philosophy of the institution or agency along with the potential it offers for professional, ministerial, and personal learning.
3. At least a tentative choice for Non-Parochial Internship should be made and communicated with the Director of Pastoral Interns by early January of second theology.
4. A firm Internship decision should be made by April 15 of second theology. The approval of the project must be secured from the Director of Pastoral Interns by that date. Student negotiations with the contracting agency and site supervisor should be complete by the end of April.
5. The intern should confer with the Director of Pastoral Interns regarding the place of residence during the ten-week internship. The director usually assists the student in finding housing at a rectory in the vicinity of the internship location.
6. The intern should write on agency letterhead of the institution in which he is serving or on plain paper three to five focused learning goals that will give personal character to the ten-week Non-Parochial Internship. These may be in one or several of the following areas: personal, professional, ministerial development; and they need to be signed by both the intern and the supervisor. A copy of these goals bearing the two signatures is due to the Director of Pastoral Interns by the end of the second week on site. By that same time a copy of the goals should be provided to the supervisor.
7. Visits to internship sites occur near the mid-point of the internship; the intern should anticipate this visit. The Director of Pastoral Interns will arrange date and time options with the intern who is to check with his supervisor for the best option.
8. The intern is to submit to the Director of Pastoral Interns by August 26 a three-to-five page, typed Theological Reflection paper. The paper should describe and support the key theological insight brought to focus by the Non-Parochial Internship

experience. It should also include some speculation regarding on-going benefit deriving from this insight.

9. The intern should remind the supervisor to complete his/her written evaluation and return it to the Director of Pastoral Interns also by August 26.
10. The intern should then schedule a wrap-up interview with the Director of Pastoral Interns to discuss the Non-Parochial Internship experience. The Theological Reflection paper and supervisor's evaluation will be in hand for reference. This interview is to be arranged at the student's earliest convenience: before the end of September.
11. The intern is expected to participate in the group peer reflection session concerning recently completed projects which is arranged by the Director of Pastoral Interns in early September.

THE PASTORAL INTERNSHIP

The Pastoral Internship is a nine-month experience, September through May, of comprehensive, full-time parish ministry. Under ordinary circumstances it occurs after the first two years and before the final two years of theology.

A separate manual details the Pastoral Internship Program. The Director of Pastoral Interns presents the manual during the Supervisor/Intern Orientation program which takes place in the spring of second theology. The following elements of the program, however, may be mentioned by way of overview:

PARISH ASSIGNMENTS

Each seminarian, if required to participate in the internship year, is assigned to a parish in his home diocese by a process determined by that diocese. In the Archdiocese of Cincinnati, after consultation with available pastor-supervisors, the seminary Formation Team and the Archbishop or his delegate, the Director of Pastoral Interns, informs the seminarian of his appointment to the parish in which he will serve. Supervisors are pastors who have received supervisory training under the auspices of the Director of Pastoral Interns. Much consideration is given to placing the seminarian with the parish, supervisor and staff determined to be the best match for his individual needs for pastoral learning and personal discernment. In order to fully experience the diocesan novitiate, the intern lives at the parish rectory during the nine-month internship. As noted, prior to the internship students and supervisors participate in a springtime two-day orientation program describing the components of the parish internship.

LEARNING AGREEMENT

The intern and supervisor collaborate in designing a learning agreement that outlines the intern's involvement in the work of the parish as well as focuses on the ministerial development goals of the intern. Written copies are to be given to each member of the

pastoral staff and also sent to both the Director of Pastoral Interns and the intern's formation advisor at the seminary.

SEMINARS

In late summer before beginning the internship the interns are required to participate in a two-day departure program designed to provide information that will facilitate their transition into the parish life and ministry. Twice more during this intensive parish experience all the interns return to the seminary campus for seminars related to their present and future ministry. The seminar programs are designed to focus on pastoral issues through professional presentation and peer dialogue.

In addition, each diocese is encouraged to provide educational opportunities for its interns related to the local Church, for example, a program acquainting students with the diocese's Catholic Social Services, the Office of Religious Education, etc.

VISITATION

Ordinarily, the Director of Pastoral Interns will make two supervisory site visits during the course of the internship. The purpose of these visits is to discuss the progress of the intern, his ministerial ability, and the relationship between the intern and his supervisor/staff. Additional visits may be made as needed or desired. The director is also in regular communication with the Formation Team concerning the progress of the individual interns. The first site visit will occur in late autumn of the internship and will include an informational meeting with the parish staff. The final visit will be scheduled during the spring semester.

EVALUATION

Three times during the pastoral internship written reports are prepared. The fall preliminary assessment includes the intern's self-evaluation and supervisor's observations. The supervisor completes a mid-year evaluation of the intern. The final evaluation is a comprehensive document incorporating comments from the intern's self-evaluation and evaluations received from the supervisor, the pastoral staff, and 5-7 selected parishioners. The intern receives the composite evaluation, and copies are sent to his bishop and vocation director.

CONTACT WITH THE SEMINARY DURING THE INTERNSHIP YEAR

A communications link between the seminary and the interns is maintained through the Director of Pastoral Interns and class representatives.

CONTINUING AFFILIATION WITH HIS PARISH OF INTERNSHIP

While the official period of internship ends with the conclusion of the school year in May, seminarians often remain in their internship parish through that summer. If possible, even after the year of internship and during the time before ordination, the student is encouraged to maintain an ongoing relationship of ministry with the internship parish.

While keeping a priority on seminary requirements, periodic ministry might include practicum work, preaching, teaching and liturgical involvement.

NON-ATHENAEUM STUDENTS

It is possible for students from other seminaries to apply for the pastoral internship program under the supervision of Mount St. Mary's Seminary. The policy that governs such admissions may be obtained from the Director of Pastoral Interns.

THE PASTORING SKILLS PRACTICUM

As a part of their pastoral internship the seminarians also complete the Pastoring Skills Practicum associated with the academic course P 250 Pastoral Leadership: The Dynamics of Pastoring. In general, as its subtitle suggests, this practicum introduces the seminarian to an experience of the dynamics of pastoring, the universal demands on pastoral leadership and his talents for this ministry via a pastoring project at his parish internship site, or in special circumstances, a different parish approved by the instructor. The supervision of this practicum is the joint responsibility of the on-location supervisor and the Director of Pastoral Interns and the details are spelled out in the *Athenaeum Catalog* and the Pastoral Internship Manual.

THIRD THEOLOGY: SACRAMENTAL MINISTRY AND PARISH ADMINISTRATION

No specific off-campus field education programs are set up for men in Third Theology. They continue their association with their internship parishes if these are in the area, or if not, they develop an equivalent connection with a local parish that can be utilized for their ministry after their ordination as deacons this year and for the upcoming practicums.

That does not mean the pastoral formation pillar is neglected in Third Theology. As they continue their ministerial education, they concomitantly take a number of academic courses that have components which are pastoral in nature (and may even involve practice on-site in parishes). These courses nevertheless achieve a number of the goals that the *Program of Priestly Formation* §239 lists as requirements of a seminary's pastoral formation program, for example, P 234 Pastoral Administration (which addresses the leadership development requirement, assisting the seminarian to acquire basic skills for administering the physical and financial resources of a parish), and LS 238 Blessings and Rites (which familiarizes the seminarians with blessings and sacramentals, the order of funerals, and the sacraments of baptism and marriage).

FOURTH THEOLOGY: THE MINISTERIAL PRACTICUMS

During Fourth Theology the seminarian takes part in the remaining required practicum courses of the MDiv curriculum.

THE PREACHING AND SACRAMENTAL CELEBRATION PRACTICUMS

P 241 HOMILETICS II: PREACHING AT MASS

In this practicum seminarians who have been ordained deacons are assigned to parishes where they regularly preach in the context of Sunday Mass. In these parishes they work with teams of parishioners in examining and reflecting upon the Scriptures and in the evaluation of their preaching. They develop homilies in light of ongoing congregational analysis and homiletic principles while utilizing different homily forms and exploring a variety of preaching styles.

LS 240 LITURGICAL PRACTICUM: THE MASS

This practicum is associated with the course, LS 235 Theology of the Eucharist. This practicum involves the actual practice of the celebration of Mass under supervision and videotaped for evaluation and critique.

In addition to the required Mass practicum course, fourth year theology students also have the option of taking LS 301 Extraordinary Form of the Roman Rite in which the students are taught to celebrate the Mass according to the 1962 *Missale Romanum*.

LS 241 MINISTERIAL CHANT PRACTICUM

This course equips students to chant Mass collects, prefaces, the Gospel, as well as the Easter Exsultet.

LS 239 PENANCE PRACTICUM

This practicum is associated with the course, LS 236 Theology of Penance and Anointing of the Sick. This practicum, like the others in the fourth year, is administered by the professors teaching its associated course on the sacraments of Penance and the Anointing of the Sick. In this practicum the seminarians practice the celebration of the Sacrament of Reconciliation in its various options under supervision and guidance.

INDIVIDUAL ADAPTATIONS IN THE PROGRAM

Many students come to Mount St. Mary's with prior experience in the field of ministry. However, because of the range of needs in the church today, there will also be areas of pastoral service which even the mature student has not yet experienced, but will be part of his responsibility as a priest. Consequently, each student is to work out his program of pastoral ministry in conjunction with the Director of Field Education and/or Director of Pastoral Interns in their respective areas of responsibility. In some cases the substitution of an alternate program or activity would be the best solution. In other cases, if a previous experience meets the standards of the field education office, consideration may be requested of the Academic Dean to grant an equivalency and award the required field education units. The application for equivalency must be made in writing through the Field Education Office.

EXPENSES

Travel expenses incurred for the apostolic works, social ministry project, and all practicum field placements are normally the responsibility of the student. If there are special circumstances that would make this a significant problem in an individual instance, the student may discuss the matter with the Director of Field Education to see if other arrangements can be made to assist in covering these costs.

A student ordinarily resides in a parish rectory during the summer months. During the summer of his non-parochial internship, he is to live in a parish near to his placement. In exchange for room and board, he is expected to provide some service to the parish (for example, assistance at Sunday liturgies, being evening receptionist, doing maintenance work, etc.). In addition, ordinarily the Archdiocese of Cincinnati provides a personal stipend to its students during their 10-week Non-Parochial Internship from which incidental expenses can be taken. Provisions other dioceses may make for their seminarians in this internship may be pursued with the responsible persons in those dioceses.

Pastoral interns during their parochial internship are considered part of parish staff of the parish in which they serve. As such, they ordinarily receive a stipend from the parish for the duration of the internship. Sometimes diocesan budgets assist in providing the stipend. For students from the Archdiocese of Cincinnati, in some cases stipend monies may come from the seminary field education budget.

SUPERVISION IN THE FIELD EDUCATION PROGRAM

Supervision in any arena implies that someone oversees the activity of another. What marks supervision in Theological Field Education is that its aim is not primarily directed to the work being done as much as it is to the training of the one doing the work – to assist the seminarian in becoming a competent minister and in doing effective ministry after ordination. Good supervision always leads toward good self-supervision. From this perspective the following points may be mentioned:

1. The Purpose of field education

Field Education is a learning activity that has been specifically designed to bring the student to: {a} theological understanding, {b} professional skills, {c} ministerial attitudes, and {d} personal maturity through practice in actual ministry and reflection thereupon.

2. Supervision from this perspective

Therefore the relationship of supervisor to learner is not to be thought of as that of boss to worker, nor as only that of a job overseer. Rather, supervision in a field education experience is designed to help the student ask the right kind of questions and to be with him as he explores those questions. The "right kind of questions" includes those exploring theological dimensions in the field experience, those asking what really happened in the situation, and those surfacing the student's judgments and insights during field education encounters and the reasons for them.

If supervision is not to interfere with what actually happens in the ministerial situation but is rather to help the student understand, then supervision is accomplished primarily in a reflective way – the supervisor leads the student to reflect upon his experience in order to understand it and to recognize its meaning. If supervision is really to facilitate a process occurring within the student, it must be concerned with his growth.

Accordingly, supervision includes a clear recording of the student's progress. The supervisor must have some rather clear objectives before he/she starts supervising. The student's goals, coupled with the supervisor's guiding word and example, provide a rich resource for the seminarian's future ministry.

3. Ways of doing supervision

Supervision may include such techniques as:

- a) a personal interview where the student's perceptions and feelings about the experience are paramount and their implications for his future ministry can be explored;
- b) a write-up of a critical incident or a verbatim report of the field experience;
- c) a reflective seminar with a peer group so that the student receives group

- feedback, evaluation, and support; and
d) evaluations arrived at jointly by the supervisor and student.

Whatever techniques are used, it is important that a formal schedule of supervisory activities be set up and adhered to.

4. The supervisor

From all this, it is clear that the supervisor in a field education program should be the kind of person who has sufficient insight and sensitivity to know what goes on in the process of self-awareness, has some experience and skill in theologizing, appreciates the role and responsibilities of ministers today, and preferably has education and skills in counseling. Opportunities for future training and self-improvement are encouraged for all supervisors.

EVALUATION IN THE FIELD EDUCATION PROGRAM

Evaluation is a continual process. It is an indispensable component in any educational system, but especially in field education. Students and supervisors assume the responsibility together for clarifying the goals of a particular pastoral experience. Regular meetings between student and supervisor are expected to evaluate development in relation to agreed-upon goals. The final evaluation is a written document from the student's supervisor signed by both supervisor and student. This evaluation is kept in the student's personal field education file. It is intended to help the student identify his own specific gifts for ministry, and to provide input from the broader church regarding his readiness for ordained ministry. In field education the goal is growth on the part of the seminarian. Regardless, therefore, of whether a given effort was successful or fell short in some measure, it is still valuable for what the seminarian can learn from it, and for its ability to help him improve his personal skills and clarify his vocational decision.

ROLE OF FIELD EDUCATION STAFF

The Field Education staff – the Director of Field Education and the Director of Pastoral Interns – have responsibility in their respective areas for:

1. identifying appropriate settings in which Mount St. Mary's students can gain pastoral experience and publicizing these programs to them;
2. interviewing students in order to determine the best placement in relation to individual ability and the needs of the Church;
3. approving supervisors for the seminarians' field experience;
4. helping students develop working agreements with supervisors, as needed;
5. especially in the pastoral year, but in other field placements as well if beneficial, visiting students and supervisors on-site; observing the student in action; and reviewing with both supervisor and student the progress being realized concerning the hopes and goals of the student for this experience;
6. communicating with vocation directors or other diocesan personnel regarding pastoral placements, as needed;
7. organizing theological reflection groups with students and other resource persons, if requested;
8. receiving final evaluations from supervisors and students at the conclusion of each field education placement and reviewing these reports with the student, and where applicable, with the Formation Team of the seminary and the seminarian's formation advisor;
9. making recommendations to individual students regarding their readiness for a particular form of ministry;
10. keeping individual student records of projects, placements and supervisors in order to assure comprehensive pastoral experience before ordination to priesthood and conferral of the Master of Divinity degree; and
11. providing programs related to pastoral ministry for specific purposes, for example, the parish internship seminars, the orientation program for incoming students, etc.

PROFESSIONAL MINISTERIAL ETHICS

Seminarians are preparing, step by step, for the priesthood, by virtue of which they will “*stand and act in the community in the name and person of Jesus Christ, Head and Shepherd of the Church.*” (PPF §237) As a consequence, the closer they come to ordination, the more closely their ministry should approximate in style and motivation that of the one who “*came not to be served but to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many.*” (Mk 10:45)

The first and fundamental norm for the ethics of seminarians engaged in pastoral ministry must be the teachings of Jesus. Therefore ever more prayerful reflection upon the passages of the Gospel in which Jesus lays out the kind of ministry he expects his disciples to carry out in his name is essential. Equally important is conscientious attention to the Lord’s critique of the attitudes and actions of religious personnel that he did *not* want his own to manifest in their ministry.

One of the extremely important contributions that the supervisors in the Field Education program provide is to model and clarify for the seminarian how these general principles and Gospel mandates apply to the concrete circumstances that arise in their particular arena of ministry, and the discernment process by which a specifically Christian response to concrete situations may be identified.

In that reflection three areas out of very many may merit explicit mention:

Serving and Being Served

- ❖ The seminarian’s life should be marked by a desire to be of service as much as possible consistent with his other responsibilities, rather than by the attempt to find the bare minimum necessary to satisfy the obligation the program imposes.
- ❖ Granting that persons of certain personalities, characteristics, interests, values and theological stances will naturally be more attractive to him than others, nevertheless the seminarian will endeavor to provide equally committed service to others without regard to their age, race, gender, social status or mental/physical abilities.
- ❖ The seminarian, like all Church ministers, has an obligation to those he serves to be as knowledgeable and competent and prepared for his assignments as he can be. Nevertheless it is important that he keep in mind that he is present in his field education assignments precisely as one who is learning, not as the authority.
- ❖ The seminarian should have sufficient self-discipline to maintain clear boundaries in his pastoral relationships to ensure that they in fact serve the other rather than the seminarian’s own needs for attention, dependency, etc.
- ❖ Precisely because the seminarian is in the process of becoming a priest, it is not uncommon for people to accord him already the respect and deference that they show to the ordained. The temptation is strong to relish these marks of respect. The seminarian must be alert to the temptation and careful to measure his attitude by that of Christ. (Phil 2:5-8; Mt 20:25-27)

- ❖ Prudence must be exercised in the matter of accepting gifts or particular favors

from those to whom the seminarian ministers in a field education assignment. As much as possible, care is to be taken to avoid dual relationships that can lead to conflict of interest and misunderstandings even as they feed a sense of entitlement on the part of the priest-to-be.

Sexual Conduct

- ❖ It goes without saying that in all his relationships the seminarian must model in word and deed the chastity required by a life of celibacy embraced for the sake of the Kingdom.
- ❖ Great prudence must be exercised in evaluating whether a hug or indeed any form of physical contact is an appropriate expression of pastoral care in a given instance. The standard must be how the gesture is perceived by the *other*, and the potential for misperception is great since there are always many factors in that person's life and previous experience that the minister cannot know.
- ❖ The seminarian has a responsibility to be familiar with the dynamics of transference and counter-transference that make pastoral ministers vulnerable to violating sexual boundaries, and with the warning signs that one is approaching a boundary violation.
- ❖ As students of Mount St. Mary's Seminary, an institution of the Archdiocese of Cincinnati, seminarians are bound by all applicable provisions of the Archdiocese's *Decree on Child Protection* of July 1, 2013.

Respect and Confidentiality

- ❖ Like all Church ministers, the seminarian is to carefully preserve the confidentiality of what is confided to him in the course of his field education ministry. Later when engaged in group theological reflection exercises involving case studies, when preaching and offering reflections, and when simply sharing experiences in informal conversations with other seminarians, care must be taken that confidences are not broken nor identities revealed.
- ❖ The seminarian is perceived as a representative of the Church; his words and actions must reflect this status lest he give scandal. By avoiding gossip and conversation that is demeaning or disrespectful or harmful to another's reputation the seminarian needs to demonstrate his trustworthiness as one who respects the dignity of all human persons.
- ❖ Notwithstanding the ordinary inviolateness of confidences, seminarians are bound by all applicable provisions of the Archdiocese's *Decree on Child Protection* of July 1, 2013 with regard to reporting any instances of physical or sexual abuse of children of which he may become aware.

For fuller context and discussion of the principles and issues involved in these matters, cf. Richard M. Gula, S.S., Ethics in Pastoral Ministry (New York: Paulist Press, 1996), to whose "Code of Professional Ministerial Responsibility" (pp. 143-152) acknowledgement is hereby made.